

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 15 and 30 without prejudice.

Please amend the claims as follows:

B2
C1

1. (Amended) An antibacterial agent, which comprises a non-pathogenic donor bacterial cell harboring at least one transmissible plasmid comprising:

a) an origin of replication for synthesizing the plasmid in a bacterial cell, wherein initiation of replication at the origin is negatively controlled by a plasmid replication repressor, wherein in the absence of the plasmid replication repressor the transmissible plasmid undergoes runaway replication;

b) an origin of transfer from which conjugative transfer of the transmissible plasmid initiates from the donor cell to at least one recipient cell; and, optionally,

c) at least one screenable marker gene;

wherein the donor cell further comprises one or more transfer genes conferring upon the donor cell the ability to conjugatively transfer the transmissible plasmid to the recipient cell, and wherein the donor cell produces the plasmid replication repressor, and further wherein the at least one recipient cell is a pathogenic bacterium that does not produce the plasmid replication repressor, thereby enabling the transmissible plasmid to undergo runaway replication in the recipient cell.

B2

14. (Amended) A pharmaceutical preparation for treating a patient for a bacterial infection, comprising the antibacterial agent of claim 1 formulated for a route of administration to the patient, wherein the route of administration is selected from the group consisting of: topical, oral, nasal, pulmonary, ophthalmic, aural, rectal, urogenital, subcutaneous, intraperitoneal and intravenous.

B3

29. (Amended) A pharmaceutical preparation for treating a patient for a bacterial infection, comprising the antibacterial agent of claim 1 formulated for a route of administration to the patient, wherein the route of administration is selected from the group consisting of: topical, oral, nasal, pulmonary, ophthalmic, aural, rectal, urogenital, subcutaneous, intraperitoneal and intravenous.